


THE REAL JOY OF ENTERTAINMENT



(Translation of Hindi Book

“Manoranjan Kā Manovigyāna”

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Publisher :

Shri Vedmata Gayatri Trust,
Shantikunj, Haridwar,
Uttarakhanda 249 411
India

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www.awgp.org

Ph. 91-(0)1334-260602/261955

First Edition :

2008

ISBN: 81-8255-030-0

Price: Rs. 16.00

Abstract

Entertainment is essential in today's life as a means of stress-absorption and mental-rejuvenation. Each one of us has different likings and preferences for modes of recreation and amusement. But have we found the best way that ensures fulfilling joy and creative diversion in all circumstances and moods? The book lucidly analyzes the psychology behind entertainment and presents feasible guidelines of attaining the desired cheerful effects with additional benefits of efficient management of life.

Everywhere Entertainment!

Entertainment is a prime necessity of our lives. The nature of human mind is such that it always needs and aspires for joy. This eternal quest drives it to seek entertainment. At a superficial level, entertainment is an event, performance, or activity designed to give pleasure, relaxation or enthusing diversion. Playing of sport and reading of literature are usually included in entertainment, but, more specifically, these are called recreational activities, because they involve some active participation beyond mere leisure.

People usually long for an opportunity to have some entertainment and are often seen spending substantial time and money for this. But do they always get joy? Do they know what really entertains their minds and how? What is the science or psychological basis of entertainment? What is the reality of joy, what are the dimensions of its existence and experience? How can we get lasting happiness? Before we look into these intriguing aspects, let us first glance through our common observations and conceptions.

Diversity of Entertainment:

People do have different tastes for entertainment, but in some form or the other, it usually relates to some sort of sensual pleasure or instinctive joy. Natural instincts of mind are such that it craves for the instinctive joys of taste, fragrance, melody, sight of beauty, etc. This is why many people are so keen on eating delicious food, they feel some kind of 'joy' in eating. Drinking tea, coffee, cold carbonated beverages, or liquor, outing, picknicking, participating in horse race, playing or watching games or sports, watching cinema, etc are also common means of entertainment.

Some people like comedies, of these some prefer absurd comedy, some like obscene jokes and gestures, while others choose classic and witty comedies. Some are fond of reading and writing, some like (re)creative activities like gardening, painting, etc. Whereas for some these are a part of their professions and livelihood, such people need not necessarily enjoy these activities. Easy and common modes of entertainment these days include – listening to music or dialogues of favorite actor/actresses; watching movies, music videos, dances and plays; participating in such activities, or simply talking about these, etc.

Driven by instinctive urge or sensuous lust, some people find amusement in erotic thinking, imagination, watching or creating pornography and substandard movies, and other sexual activities. Frequent excitement of genitals does them more harm than giving any entertainment. The fire of sensuous lust inflames higher with every such activity. But there is a limit for the physical body so one can't remain engaged in it for a long stretch of time. Erotic thinking and sensuous orgasms negatively affect hormonal secretion. Immediate hazards include lack of mental concentration and imbalance of conduct. This kind of entertainment diminishes their potentials of deep and focused thinking and courage of moral refinement and impedes the ascent of their character in several ways.

People addicted to such amusements are often found dissatisfied, easily irritable, short-tempered, or suffering from some physical ailments and psycho-complexes. Sustenance of such entertainments risks complications like mental infirmity, perversion, or even psychopathic mentality.

Another kind of entertainment which dominates the less evolved mentality is that driven by the greed of tongue. People eat or drink anything that gives a zingling stimulation, or titillating, juicy, sweet taste to their tongues. Some are crazy for fried spicy stuff while some others for cheese-full, buttery softness and others crave for lavish sweets. Increased greed of the tongue and burning of health and money are certain here rather than attainment of any real entertainment. It is the tendency of greed inscribed in one's mind, that causes the tongue to long for taste.

If there were any real entertainment in eating as per these instincts, then one should have never got bored of eating the same taste, same recipe again and again, every day, every time.... (!) For the moment, even if we don't consider the problems of stomach-upset, amount of cooking effort and money required, etc, the basic and most obvious question here is – how and why something that was a source of pleasure gets turned into boredom. Is this what entertainment is meant for – giving rise to temporary and then contradictory feelings?

Similar is the case of entertainment through the medium of eyes. People like to watch colorful paintings, photographs, fireworks, etc. Wonderful fireworks are produced at the venues of grand celebrations! But what is the net entertainment except a momentary delight? And, at what cost in terms of money and air-pollution? Assuming that cost was immaterial for one, even then, will he continue to like with the same affinity, watching the same fireworks for hours? No. In the normal course no one would. Instead, if one

would have spent the same amount of money and efforts in helping someone needy, the happiness generated by this act of benevolence would have been more intense and longer lasting than that obtained by fireworks and crackers. The wastage in hogging food for greed could similarly be saved and the resources could more constructively be used for some good and productive work that would make more people happy and thus return manifold happiness to the doer too.

Roving out and visiting tourist spots is also a futile exercise and illusive entertainment unless supplemented with augmentation of knowledge and new experience of interacting with people around.

It is true that because of its natural agility human mind looks for varieties. Therefore the same kind of entertainment may not amuse it for too long at a stretch. Then why does it not explore the infinite varieties of entertainment stored in every manifestation of Nature? Some people enjoy watching magic shows, circuses, skilled performances of trained monkeys, shows of snake charmers, etc. Look at the gamut of magical mysteries and amazing creations enfolded in the grip of Nature! Everything is astonishing here. Every thing around is vibrant, capable of inducing new joy every moment!

Nature's Panorama:

Look at the sky. Its vastness embraces immense solitude – a slight experience of that itself is so exhilarating! Glimpse of the moving clusters of clouds, the thunders and glaze of lightening, the myriad of glittering stars, the serene void with its soothing bluish glow or charming rainbows and silvery clouds, the sight of the sky in so many ways can generate amazing thrill into one's mind and, at the same time also fill it with inexplicable calmness, elating cheer, hope and enthusiasm! The gigantic peaks of mountains, the snow, the greenery, the multiple shades of dawn and evening, the twinkling glitter of stars, reflected all around are marvelous. Mind simply gets

enchanted by the majestic beauty of Nature. The same is true of the melodious flow of rivers, the charming splendor of waterfalls and springs, boundless grandeur of the seas and the unflinching tides of waves. There is no parallel to the immensity enfolded in Nature's beauty.

The deeper we see this astonishing creation, more intense will be the curiosity, interest and delight of our minds.

Human body itself is so wonderful! Its anatomy and physiology, its adaptive functions, auto-regulated and self-organizing capacity of its cellular components, everything is just amazing. We may not be able to feel the continuous excitation and information processing of the neuronal network in the brain, the secretions of hormones, etc, but the beating of heart, periodicity of respiratory cycle, elasticity of the muscles, occurrence of sleep, hunger, etc as per the biological clock, experience of chill, heat, etc as per the weather, and many common experiences of this sort keep illustrating the incredible system of Nature every moment.

The impulses of emotions are like twinkling of stars in the endless sky of the mind. If we pay attention to these and look at the enormity and ups and downs of the thoughts, the ever-varying reflections of intelligence or absurdity in these, we will find that the mind is a perpetual Pandora's box with infinite magical tools. And then, the wonders of human intellect, is simply beyond words. It is the majestic acumen, limitless grasp, unbounded creativity, and incisive analytical reasoning of human intellect that has generated the endless ocean of scholarly knowledge, philosophy, literature and art, and created the gigantic mountains of scientific discoveries, inventions and technologies.

Why only in humans? God has also bequeathed countless varieties of potentials in the gamut of other species. The flying birds in the sky

make it a floating garden of dynamic flowers of multiple colors. The melody of their chirping adds to the cheerful music of Nature. From the tiniest insect to the largest wild animal - from amoeba to dinosaur – each one has its own distinctive faculties, special nature. Their sizes, shapes, colorful appearances in innumerable shades – often changing randomly or at their will, their voices, 'speech' and body languages and modes of 'distant – communication' with the fellow creatures, everything in Nature is full of ever new surprises and breathtaking splendor.

Thus, it appears that whatever is around us, easily perceivable every time is itself a grand treasure of astonishments, joyful wonders and varieties.

Our social ambience also provides us plenty of choices of amusement. People around us, our social circle, our friends, children, youths and elderly members of our family – each has his or her own personality, mindset and emotional and behavioral makeup. Each one holds in his or her self, multiple characters and episodes of a grand novel or a movie, each one has his or her own moods varying with random tones and spikes. Everybody is living in his/her own world as per his or her perception of the outer and the inner world.

Why We Don't See It?

Because of our superficial, prejudiced, or narrow attitude, many-a-times the world appears crude, random and haphazard to us. People around also seem to be preposterous, troublesome and irritating. Everything seems disorderly. Such impressions appear logical because we are unable to visualize an order or a regulating mechanism underlying the practically infinite dimensional expanse of the universe. But if we expand our vision and think and

contemplate over the genesis of the enormous diversity enfolded in Nature, we shall see that everything, every element, every expression here is complete in its own existence.

Our superficial vision, in general, cannot show us the reality in totality. Our conception, cognition and conduct are relative, subjective and incomplete because we mostly regard "*māyā*"² (illusion) as true. In reality, as the Upanishads indicate – everything has originated from the absolute completeness and is therefore complete (*Pūrṇam Idam, Pūrṇam Idam*).

Science has so far shown us that — every particle of matter, every atom, and every subatomic and nano fraction of it is in fact an expression of some energy or vibration. In other words it has also affirmed that what we perceive as the shape, color or touch of anything is not real. Moreover, what appears before us as true in the physical sense or is as perceived by us through the sense organs is also changing all the time, even in every few fractions of a second.

The work of *māyā* is like a perpetual magic-game. This game itself could be an ever-ready entertainment for our real self. But the irony is that we are more attracted towards artificiality and illusions of this creation. We don't even know our own reality. We feel our presence but don't know the purpose and identity of our existence. How could we then know why we want entertainment and by what means?

An ignorant mind finds faults and boredom in everything. Nothing can entertain it. A wise mind sees purpose and order in everything and finds entertainment everywhere around in the world, in every realm of the cosmos, in every expression of Nature. For it there is nothing except limitless entertainment and joy in every facet of life.

Art of Entertainment

A part from air, water and food, sustenance of healthy life requires a compatible ambience and direct or indirect support of fellow beings. Need for entertainment is also as important as these basic necessities, and this requirement is unique to the human species.

All through their lifespan, other creatures remain preoccupied in arranging for their food and shelter. As and when necessary, they have their own ways of expressing and sharing their sorrows and joys by jumping or flying, or roaring, barking, chirping, etc. They often have to traverse long stretches in the skies or in the forests and wilds. That also serves as a rejuvenating change for them. Their fights and plays within the group they live with, and their act pf hunting for the prey, etc supplement whatever more that might be needed for 'amusement'. They don't need any external source or activity of entertainment.

But this is not so in the case of human species. Our species has a mind that wanders around with ever-new thoughts, impressions,

expectations, cravings, fantasies, negativities, and what not. It perpetually accumulates more of these and hence more of agility and illusion in that process. It keeps swinging and sinking in the whirlpool of hopes and despairs, aspirations and depressions, exciting zeal and dooming lethargy, enthusing joy and vexing boredom from moment to moment. It has to face ups and downs of changing circumstances and deal with the consequences of the actions it drives. At times the burden of vicious or sick mentality becomes heavier than adversities and sinks one into the smog of despair or mire of vices. At times, little success or false ego makes the mind fly vehemently in the mirage of daydreaming and complacency. It needs lots of efforts and able support for adept tuning of mood or tempo. Entertainment is a part of such efforts or necessities.

In this respect, as for the other aspects of human life, force of the mind proves the mightiest. The domain of mind encompasses intrinsic impressions, tendencies, convictions, faiths, inclinations, emotions, thoughts and imaginations. One's personality is a product of these mental elements. It is therefore said that one's mental state governs his circumstances. From a worldly viewpoint, by and large, these circumstances define the course or overall state of life – whether one's life is in peace and happiness or in trouble and facing adversity; whether it is excelling or declining.

Need & Purpose of Entertainment:

If somebody's mind is burdened under stress or tension, or engulfed in untoward imaginations or illusory thoughts, he will not be able to do even the normal, daily chores appropriately. He will not be able to take any decision or think properly. Sound sleep is better than partial or disturbed sleep in which one is neither awake nor asleep but keeps wandering in the landscape of haphazard dreams. He does not get any rest in such a state and gets tired without doing any work.

Stressed or tensed state of mind is more harmful. Longer the stretch of this state, the worse would be one's physical and mental health. Unnecessary irritation and apprehensions and depressions are natural consequences of such mental states. Unmindful thoughts, actions and decision occur in such a disturbed or abnormal state of mind and worsen one's circumstances on personal, social and professional fronts in several ways. Good opportunities and external support will not be of much use unless the mind is in normal state.

Energetic and balanced state of mind is a great asset that helps making good use of one's potentials and fetching the best out of any opportunity. Thoughtful and focused mind can safely float in turbulent currents of unfavorable circumstances and bear all pressures, hindrances and adversities. So it is desired to keep the mind alert and calm irrespective of the ups and downs of external circumstances. While adequate sound sleep, engaging of mind in creative activities and constructive thoughts are essential for this purpose, entertainment also provides excellent support.

Choice of Entertainment:

In general, humorous company, performances of good musicians, singers, dancers and actors (e.g., in comedy shows, dance and music programmes, and cinemas or plays, etc) provide immediate entertainment. However, it is not possible to have a humorous company all the time, or to watch such programmes in a theater, or on TV or computer, or listen to them on the radio at any arbitrary time at will. Lighter chat with people around is also not possible at random.

Moreover, it is a common experience that what entertains one and in what way, depends upon one's mental state. Some times one may be eager to watch a certain programme on television, but some other times the same programme or show may appear boring or annoying

to the same person. Sometimes one may like to listen to music while some other time chit-chatting with a friend might give the desired boost or entertaining diversion to one's mood...

Thus it is in the fitness of things to realize the psychological basis of entertainment and look for what could be the nearest and always accessible mode that would serve the purpose of entertainment.

Spirit of Entertainment in Daily Chores:

Transforming filth into cleanliness, disorder into order, lethargy into meaningful activity, is an art of beautifying life. In our own routines, working styles, in our homes, our surroundings, our work-places things are not always so neat and clean, well organized, or managed productively. Arranging things on the working table or at home itself gives a positive diversion to the mind.

Orderliness: Attempting to be a more organized person and trying orderly management of things is a wonderful way of creative entertainment. It also brings benefits in terms of efficient use of time, faster completion of daily chores as well as the assigned job. We may begin it with cleaning and proper upkeep of the tools we use – e.g. setting the bed, organizing office or study table, cupboard, bookshelf, etc. This habit would also inspire others around us.

More powerful and elevating art of experiencing and spreading joy is seeing the good that dwells in everything, everyone around. Praising somebody's good qualities is not flattering. (It turns out so if you admire someone falsely or only for some selfish motive.) Your admirations should be aimed at encouraging somebody to do much better, enhance his/her qualities and inspire others. Sometimes your few words of consolation, positive support and optimistic guidance would turn somebody's life downside up and accelerate it on the path of progress. Inducing hope and enthusiasm in a despaired or

depressed mind, motivating someone to make better use of his/her talents and potentials, uplifting the downtrodden, etc are wonderful ways of disseminating light and happiness in many lives. You will feel great joy and satisfaction in every such endeavor; the feeling of which would be so fulfilling, boosting and intense that perhaps no other success, possession, or external mode of entertainment could ever provide.

Selected Reading: As most of you would have experienced while reading the newspapers and magazines, any report of cruelty, crimes or immoral conduct would somewhat upset the mind and recede its enthusiastic mood. Negativity spreads negativity. Company of criminal mentality, perverted persons or thoughts attracts, influences and pulls many others on the slippery road of decline. Positive and virtuous thoughts and company of good people on the contrary induce inner delight and peace, and inspire one towards good deeds and excellence. You should therefore attempt direct or indirect contact with elevated personalities and their thoughts – by attending their discourses, discussions or regularly reading and contemplating over their thoughts and works.

There might be a lack of virtuous talents, benevolence and sincerity in the ambience you live. But there is no scarcity of inspiring narrations, works of art and fiction revolving around noble characters, biographies or memoirs, autobiographies of great personalities, their writings or recorded speeches and commentaries, and collections of their works. Reading or listening to these is indeed an enchanting source that would entertain and also illuminate your mind.

Interactions with Family & Friends: Rendering amicable support and help to family members, friends and colleagues in their

good endeavors, nurturing harmony and cooperation on personal, social and professional fronts is so delighting for both the sides. Why don't we practice these in all our interactions every day? Being grateful to all those who have been kind and helpful to us is a definite means of generating pleasant calmness and delight. If we start recording all the good that we have ever come across, read or seen, then all the troubling thoughts and negative feelings of arrogance, anger, jealousy, etc will begin to lose their grip on us. We will find that in spite of inflation of adversities and negativity, the extent of auspiciousness, goodwill and consequent happiness would always weigh heavier.

Wipe out the bad, debasing, depressing or annoying memories by instant recalling of something good in your life, howsoever short-lived or insignificant that might have been. This would cast out the smog of fallacies, vices, fatigue, boredom and tensions. Instead, it will induce the joy that you keep hunting in external means of cinema, television and what not.

Rather than killing time in gossiping and watching television shows, videos or cinema everyday, it is better to spend some free time sitting with family, playing with children, reading storybooks for them, having light chit-chat with clean humor, narrating or discussing something that gives useful information, knowledge or positive thought to everyone. Try some creative work on holidays collectively with family and friends. Your daily chores, your routine job, would then become more interesting.

You can fetch entertainment from everything, every moment, if you cultivate a cooperating and joyous temperament and look at the horizons of happiness with a perspective consonant with your nature.

Pulse of Joy in Amusement!

Because of the influence of beastly tendencies and impressions inscribed in its unconscious core (*chitta*) since earlier births, the human mind is usually attracted towards instinctive joys. Pleasures of sense organs set the basis of its amusement. People's thirst for entertainment mostly revolves around fulfilling the greed of the tongue, carnal pleasure, sensual titillation, erotic imagination, sight of gorgeous scenes, watching physical beauty, and having luxurious comforts, etc. Lack of such pleasures or the force of mental lethargy and dullness, or some psychological complexes drive some people towards intoxication.

Cinema, TV, DVD-players and radio are by and large the most popular modes of amusement among the masses these days. However, even while 'entertaining' themselves via these mediums, people crave for lavish food and coziness for the body. Same is true in the case of hobby of tourism; so much so, that even while visiting the places of pilgrimage and offering customary rituals of worship, people often look for the most comfortable stay, and warm and tasty meals. Even their travel-kits are crowded with so many gadgets, as

though they are arranging for a make-shift house. Thus in one form or the other, instinctive lust and sentient pleasures dominate one's quest and feel of entertainment. But, as the thirst of sensual joys never gets quenched, none of these modes of amusement provide the real or lasting joy.

Many people enjoy relaxing idly. They eagerly await vacations and holidays. Even during the working days they look for excuses to have casual leave. Work appears a burden to them. They enjoy sleeping, eating and gossiping or watching movies in a cozy posture. Thought of duty or hard work puts them off. They often dream of getting relief from work and given a chance with somewhat reasonable lump sum or pension they opt for voluntary retirement. But once they are totally free from work, the joy of holidays begins to fade gradually. The same dull routine every day turns out quite boring. How much can one watch the TV and how much can one sleep on a routine basis? Monotonicity vexes their minds and non-activity rusts their alacrity and weakens their body part in several ways.

Physical activity is necessary for maintaining good health. Bed-ridden patients are also given physiotherapeutic exercise for some movement of their body parts. Without movement they would suffer from numbness and bed-sores. Physically handicapped persons are also taught special exercises for adept blood circulation and good health of entire body. If we don't move our hands or legs for even a week or so, the muscles of these components will get stiffened. Movement and adequate physical exercises are also essential for proper digestion, respiration and blood circulation – functions that are fundamental to bodily health.

Prime difference between inanimate and animate world is activity. Mental activity is no less important than physical activity. Empty mind becomes a devil's workshop. Untoward thoughts, haphazard

imaginings and negative tendencies accumulate faster in an idle mind. Taking necessary sleep of 6 to 7 hours after hard work, and relaxing in between long stretches of thorough activity is fine but sleeping or lying down idly for the entire day is altogether different, it amounts to lousiness. Dreary and lethargic fellows are irritating burdens on the fellow beings. They live in a lackluster or intoxicated kind of state, and are akin to being half-dead. In a state of sound sleep one can't take care of one's clothing, one does not even know whether one's body is covered or not. Sluggishness of body and mind is worse, they turn one into a shameless, hopeless, cynical being. Prolonged laziness and insipidity result in fast mental and physical degeneration and drag one into the mire of self-deterioration.

Experiencing Entertainment:

Dullness is contrary to entertainment. Mental alertness and sensitivity is must to experience the real joy of any amusement. As such most of the world is made up of inert matter. Things by themselves can't react and render any enthusing impact on us. Our sense organs can perceive only some properties of matter in their limited capacity. Then what makes us experience joy in material things? Experience is a faculty of the Consciousness Force (*chetanā*); it is through this force that the mind feels and thinks while sense organs are only its tools. It is the individual self that feels joy, sorrow, repulsion, etc with the help of the natural sensors of brain, eyes, tongue, nose, ears, genitals and skin.

Any facility, activity, interaction or experience becomes entertainment only if you feel the pulse of joy in it^[1]. It is your emotional and mental conditioning, the level (state) and intensity of your *chetanā* that feels this pulse. Your outlook is an expression of your emotional nature, a measure of your mental makeup. So the art of being happy or getting the joy of entertainment is basically the art

of emotional fine-tuning, art of attitudinal refinement and being positive. The world around you is a reflection of your outlook. With broadening and illumination of your outlook you begin to see harmony in diversity. If you cultivate a temperament to see the good that dwells in everything in the world, in everybody you deal with, then there will be no dearth of happiness and enthusiasm in your heart. Positive thoughts will spark new energy and creativity in your mind and you will find yourself immersed in an ocean of joy and knowledge. The more you grasp and disseminate this enlightening joy, the wider and deeper would be its domain.

The light of bliss, the music of entertainment lies in your own self. The outer world and its activities are only mirrors or strings in which you see the glow of this light or play the melody of this natural music.

Shades of Outlook:

The famous anecdote of epic "Mahabharata" reminds us of this fact: Once Guru Dronacharya asked Yudhishtira and Duryodhana to count the number of good and bad people in their kingdom and nearby villages. Both of them obeyed the respected teacher and returned back with their counts after few months. Arrogant and cruel Duryodhana's tally showed that every one was bad whereas benevolent Yudhishtira found that every one was good. Pretty flowers as well as wet soil and stinking pits of natural fertilizers exist in a garden. The humming bees fly and sit near the flowers whereas mosquitoes grow on the filth. Nature has kept its magic box open for us, it is up to us what we pick up.

Some philosophers describe the world as heaven where the divine beauty of the Supreme Creator is expressed in all living beings (e.g. A hymn in the holy Ramayana says "*Siyā Rāma Maya Saba Jag Jānī| Karaun Praṇāma Jora Juga Pānī||*"; meaning: I see Lord Ram and Goddess Sita everywhere in the world and so pay my

sincere respect to everyone). Whereas to some others it is a replica of hell; they preach people to discard everything and leave this world. To a patriot the motherland is worth revering like God. But, a traitor does not mind selling his own country and ruining it for his mean aims. Saints and sages remain detached from the pleasures of the world, yet they do not want to leave it. For them the world is a platform for noble deeds, they live here for the service and welfare of all living beings. The same world appears different to different people as per their mentality.

If one compares himself with the most affluent and powerful people known to him, his own status will appear to him as penniless and downtrodden. On the contrary, if he looks at the less privileged and poorer section of the society, he would thank his own fortunes and will weigh greater value in whatever he has. In reality his status remains the same but just the way he looks at it makes a drastic difference to how he feels about it. Similar is the case of our reactions to everything we perceive and live with.

Any work or activity against one's liking or choice makes him tired and bored in no time. Even a small task appears a huge burden and challenge if one has to do it against his will. Same exercise of Mathematics is a terror for one student and a mental boost for another in the same class. Prisoners in a jail do lesser work than laborers who work hard day-and-night to somehow raise their families. Still the former would be unhappy in the jail and eagerly await their release. In spite of lots of discomfort, and tiring journeys and activities people feel so energetic and cheerful during pilgrimages and on the occasions of wedding ceremonies of relatives and friends!

The same season of autumn is a period of loss for a potter, but of gainful opportunities for a gardener. The scene is reversed in

summer. Neither of them can change the seasons. Only thing they need is to adapt and try their level best to acclimatize their activities. Nature offers abundance of resources and chances to us to be happy but nothing is stationary or perennial in its manifestation, or in the world we perceive. It is ironical that most of us instead of doing the simple task of adjusting our attitude want and attempt to mold the circumstances as well as the people around to behave as per our expectations. At times we even wish the cycle of nature to adjust to our convenience.

Change of circumstances and outlooks of others are not in our hands. But our own attitude and perception can be entirely in our grip.

One may doubt or mistake a thing kept in a dark place. But the light of tiny torch itself is sufficient to show its identity and wane out all suspicions. The feeling of unity, amity, togetherness, oneness, is like a beam of light which wherever projected will eliminate the haze of prejudices and misconceptions and produce illumination to show the possibilities of unalloyed happiness. Your torch is in your hands. You don't need anyone else's support or grace to light it. The keys to the heaven and hell of your life are hidden inside your closed fists. Its up to you which one you want to open.

Your mind gets tensed because of unchecked expectations, pressures of meeting demands and completing works beyond your normal capacity. Adversities and challenges of circumstances further aggravate it. This results in untoward consequences and health hazards like high blood pressure, anxiety, aggression, cardiovascular stress, etc. No amount of medical consultation and medication can help you unless you change your own outlook and see things as part of the plot of Nature's drama in which you are only to play your role. Your name, fame, success, failure, status, etc are all temporary like an

act of a play. Have an outlook that shows you the luster of unconditional joy. Then no amount of adversity or pressure will tense your mind. Such a positive attitude serves a great purpose of entertainment and is also most effective as a preventive remedy against all stresses.

Be Sporting:

Adopting a sportsman's attitude will keep you full of optimism and creative ideas. It is in a way synonymous with a balanced and zealous state of mind. In simple terms, it means that you should face adverse or testing phases of life like a fellow player's challenge on playground. You should just enjoy playing your game. The opponent may win sometimes but you would also get a chance to revert the situation some other time. Irrespective of who wins, it is the sheer joy of playing the sport which is primary. Life is also a play on the vast ground of the world. Do not lose hope and don't get scared in any circumstance; just play your game with your best skills and zeal. This sportsman's attitude will sustain the vitality and wit of your mind and thus help in finding best solutions to all the problems, all the hurdles on the way.

Usually one walks in forward direction. But as and when necessary, one may walk backwards, or turn towards the sideways too. Similarly, even though usually one makes favorable use of the circumstances and available resources, one should, if needed, also be able to adjust according to the circumstances and available tools. So many tiny creatures live in the depths of the sea. There also are many bigger ones who are ready to gulp the smaller ones at any moment. In spite of this danger the latter don't leave the sea and live with their best possible defense. They have their own ways of surviving without fear. Peace, stability and relaxed state of mind are the nearest companions of fearlessness; they defeat all anxiety, suspicions and tensions.

Rabbits and deers also live in the forests where lions and tigers do. If they remained scared of the attack of the latter, the tiny animals would have lost all sleep and hunger and would have died of weakness. But as we all know, they do spend their life-span in as natural a way as they would do at a place without any violence; they run around, eat, play in their groups, reproduce, as per their natural system and in moments of attack of a mightier enemy, defend themselves bravely till the last moment. Are we the human beings, weaker than these tiny creatures that we can't face the challenges at our level?

Rest assured of your inner strength and counter the adversities with bravery, face the challenges with the power of your wisdom. Make entertainment a part of your prudent attitude. Then everything will become a tool of your entertainment, every phase of life will be like a phase of game for you. Actors in a cinema or theater change their costumes and roles as per the requirement of the play. Do they ever jump with pride if they get a role of their choice, or cry and give hopeless performance in case they don't? If they do so, then they are not at all good actors. You should regard the ups and downs of life as different phases, different acts of the grand play of life. You simply have to perform your role – be that comfortable and as per your liking or not.

The wheel of Nature and activities of the world will continue with infinite possibilities and vacillating realities.

Have a balanced and sporting outlook to enjoy everything and every moment that you have with you. Let life itself be a mode of entertainment, full of all colors and shades.

Review Your Lifestyle

If you take a long walk along a rough and bumpy route without any preparation or training of your muscles, you will feel cramps and pain in your legs and you may require massaging or medication to alleviate it. Overeating would result in stomach upset, acidity etc, which will also require some cure. Disorderly metabolism, disturbed sleep and tension give rise to headache along with other health hazards. Persistence of such problems leads to acute and chronic ailments. Remedies like massage and medication alone will not be effective in such cases; better medical expertise and more severe measures would then be required to eliminate or control the illness.

Apart from diseases, there are many disorders and deviations of normal functioning of the body that need proper care and cure. Many of these are psychosomatic. Irritation and fatigue in spite of a normal routine are among some common disorders, which often have psychological roots. Boredom also falls in this category, as it is not a natural characteristic of the mind.

As we all know, one requires medication to cure the sickness of physical body. We also know that one needs entertainment to get rid of boredom, stress, mental fatigue or irritation. Thus, entertainment is also a kind of 'medication' or 'remedy'. One does not go to the doctor and waste money and time in medication and remedial help without any disease or health-problem. The same should be true in the case of mind also.

Evolving State of The Living System:

In their normal states, brain, heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, and other organs continue to perform their functions throughout one's lifespan. Mind is also endowed with immense potential to carry out its job of thinking, decision-making, planning and finding optimal solutions to problems occurring in different phases of life. As per the Nature's system, it does not get disturbed or tired in transacting these duties. A laborer who does his job sincerely and with interest gets a sound sleep in the night. This is sufficient to relax his body and mind and to energize them for the next day's work. Thus, his routine continues without any problem and he does not require any additional means of rejuvenation.

Birds and animals live in complete consonance with Nature. They have to strive hard to collect their food every day and to arrange for a shelter and self-defense. Many have to traverse long distances in different seasons. They communicate via their own voice-signals and share their joys and sorrows in their groups. Knitting a nest, diving into deeper depths of sea for food, being vigilant and quick to defend against enemy's attack, fostering the offspring, etc demonstrate that their minds also remain engaged in activities that demand somewhat 'developed' skills with planning and attention. But they never fall ill or get tired or bored, and don't need any external source of entertainment.

Human species too is a member of the animal kingdom. Nature has also arranged for its healthy sustenance and keeps guiding and inspiring it via brain signals and functions of the other components of the body, when what is required for optimal functioning of the mind-body system as per the biological clock. (Feeling cold when the temperature outside falls below a threshold, feeling hungry when the body needs energy, experiencing a pinch when an insect bites etc, are amongst the enormous activities that illustrate this self-regulatory management every moment.) Tribal communities residing in forests and living in total harmony with Nature do not fall sick. In spite of hard labor and near total absence of comforts they never feel deprived of anything; neither do they suffer any tension, anxiety or any other kind of stress, nor any boredom. They are happy and energetic in their routines.

If life were really so complicated and burdensome, no creature would have existed here. Why would the individual self (*jīva*, also called the molecular soul) agree to be born in any life form if life were only a hard test?

Life is manifested in different forms (species) as per the intrinsic nature of the individual selves (*jīvas*). In its natural course, life in every form is driven by the smooth flow of Consciousness Force (*chetanā*). Human species is supposed to be most evolved life-form. The evolved manifestation of *chetanā* in a human being has endowed him with such willpower, that he can carve his own destiny and orient the course of his life in his own ways. A person's rise or fall, glory or infamy, honor or disgrace, etc — all are consequences of his own past or present actions (*karmas*). He is free to determine his actions and thus be the architect of circumstances according to his mental state.

Body Vs Mind:

Physical body being made up of inert matter has limitations. It gets tired after a finite interval of time and cannot be dragged to continue the work at the same stretch. But its rejuvenation is also easy. Good sleep of few hours is sufficient to refresh and make it ready for work again. However, things are quite different with the mind. Except in the case of animals and in infants, it is found to continue its activities in the subconscious and unconscious state even when the body is fast asleep. Its agility, aspirations and imaginations don't stop and keep creating ever-new worlds in dreams as well.

But after all, mind is also a creation of Nature, a tool of the soul, so Nature must have crafted some modes of relaxing and recharging it for constructive and meaningful activities. Indeed so! The natural mode of life is very simple and adept to provide substantial support for mental rest and rejuvenation. But what to say of the intelligent being, the human species, which wanders away from Nature and prefers an artificial life-style, and which willingly accepts to be a parasite of artificial gadgets and runs after the hype of glamour?

Driven by its ignorance, immature ambitions and false ego it thrives for more and more power, materialistic possession and social recognition. Marauding forces of passions delude it by showing it a mirage of ephemeral thrill of amusement. So instead of smoothly sailing in the natural spring of mental peace, it opts for tidal waves of stormy oceans of mental excitements, frustrations, cravings and restlessness. Being engulfed in its self-created web of complexities and worries it strives for liberation, peace and joy through external means.

Following a steady and straight path, even an ant can reach the great heights of mountains. But because of his false impressions and agile tendency to adopt short cuts, a fast runner rabbit might lose the race

to slow tortoise. A Jackal can't become a lion by wearing a fur coat. Its ambitions of ruling over the forest by coloring the skin eventually ditch it in the dark well of humiliation, scorn and endless sufferings. These play-school anecdotes warn us of the need to introspect and recheck our approach to life. But either we have no time, or we find these teachings as naïve or obsolete. Fine! But, have we ever thought who has found absolute joy in wealth and fame? Who has felt fully contended by hoarding luxuries and pompous resources?

Keep Off From the Web of Negativity:

It is a common observation that more ambitious people are more restless, short-tempered and tensed. Spreading the legs from the earth to sky is not possible for a normal being. Similarly, there is a limit to what one can earn by honest means and sincere endeavors. Unchecked ambitions and cravings of excessive possessions compel one to adopt immorality in several ways. Success earned by deception, extortion, unfair means, exploitation of others' natural rights, depriving others of their shares, etc does not bring anything but the fire of cruelty, hidden fear (of being caught one day), insecurity, company of cunning and jealous fellows, and malice and threat of rivals. It drags one under the irreversible pressure of psychosomatic sufferings.

Anatomy of the brain and the processing units of neurophysiology are such that they finely regulate the functions of the mind and body and adapt to the changes within natural thresholds (e.g. during seasonal variations).

Unrestrained ambitions, passions and egotist ventures induce abnormal excitation in the brain and hamper delicate nuclei of bio-energy. Negative emotions like jealousy, revenge, anguish, apprehension, despair, etc, also stimulate or suppress the flow of bio-electricity in brain circuits beyond the natural limits. Momentary

invigoration by narcotics and intoxicating liquor etc is also hazardous, like a hurricane that makes the trees 'dance and blow' with violent force for a few seconds but devastate the entire forest in no time. Mind is the worst hit victim of these hazards. It gets shattered, weakened and perverted. Unfulfilled ambitions or scratched arrogance produces maddening depression, irritation or hoards of negative emotions. Infirm and astray mind then pulls one into the shelter of carnal pleasure, intoxication and even obscene, heinous and debauching activities for instant relief and entertainment. But these kinds of diversions or passion-driven entertainments trigger a vicious cycle of obnoxious effects that continue to compound and enhance negativity.

Wake Up!

We find nothing wrong or missing in our life-style because we have just got used to it. Even, by chance, if sometimes we realize the need for re-orientation, our intellectual superficiality instantly overtakes and digresses our thought-process. We are so used to following the prevailing trends that we do not feel the need for any check and rectification. But then who sets the trends? Who makes the society? Who contributes to the social generalities? Each one of us is a part of it. Its time we pause and rethink, introspect if we are, in someway being influenced by ambitions, arrogance or selfish attachments.

We should review our life-style and set the things right without further delay. Else, no amount of wealth, sophistication and advancement will gift us the desired mental calm.

Stress Management by Self-Entertainment

Nature has endowed each one of us with natural tendencies of entertainment to cope up with all stresses of life. But we remain unaware of this oasis because of our extrovert attitude and our superficial understanding of our own self.

A little thought on the purpose, genesis, nature and the 'process' of experiencing entertainment, will make it clear that there are no specific criteria to define or measure entertainment. Neither are there any devices or means, which will certainly provide a particular kind of entertainment. The purpose could be served by alternate means even if one is in a specific mood to get a particular type of entertainment. (For example if one is in a mood to watch a specific movie but no tickets are available for any show on that day then he or she may opt for some other movie, theater or show). One does not have to wait for a special opportunity to have the delight of entertainment only by some specific means. One does not have to arrange for any gadgets, search for the right mode, or call a meeting, etc for this. The real source of entertainment is available all the time, one only needs to feel it, awaken it and revive it.

We all have experienced sometime or the other that a tired body or a strained mind feels relaxed and relieved for sometime by watching or doing something pleasant or enthusing. Exerting hard at work is not so much a cause of fatigue, as considering work as a burden. We often forget the fact that all works can't be of our liking; every circumstance can't be favorable. Tension or pressure – which is usually experienced in professional life these days – of completing the task beyond one's potential causes mental fatigue and stress. But to a great extent the stressed person is himself or herself responsible for this state. He/she runs for lucrative jobs and fat salaries in a hurry to become rich and successful. One invites or creates stressful circumstances by joining the rat race of fast-track 'progress' or by expecting and desiring beyond one's own worth and capabilities.

Many a times one expects the circumstances to turn favorable and the people around to act as per one's will or to remain supportive as they were sometimes earlier. One should remember that everything in the world is changing. Every one has his/her own predilections that also vary with time. We can't expect anyone to say or do what we like. If one can't discipline one's own body and mind, how could one expect to control others' minds? It is a sign of maturity and wisdom on our part to assess the circumstances and manage our aspirations and expectations accordingly.

"To deserve more and yet want less" is what corresponds to an intelligent way of gaining satisfaction and self-restrain. Adopting the principles like — "strive for victory and have malice for none" and "try for the best, be prepared for the worst", in practice is the key to fulfilling and progressive life without any stress or tension. It is not easy, but you have to start somewhere. Once you are determined to follow it or develop a 'taste' for practising it, your mind will start enjoying it. This will also trigger your hidden tendencies of 'self-emerging' entertainment.

Stress Was There in The Earlier Times Too!

We often get an impression that our ancestors had an easy life, there was no tough competition or tension. It appears as if the hazard of stress has surfaced only since past few decades. That is not quite correct. Its form and causes might have changed and the number of people suffering from mental tension and stress might have gone up in the recent times, but stress has been a part of human life since the primitive age of civilization. In the early days of civilization, struggle for survival was the cause of stress but this, similar to the stress given to start a mechanical engine, generated the zeal to face the adversities and enabled the ascent of civilization. This kind and level of stress has always been a part of evolution of life. Nature has also endowed us with enormous potential to use it as an impetus to progress.

Why Stress is a Hazard Today?

Similar to the cropping up of 'clever' evil tendencies, the man-made complexities of stress also increase with excessive ambitions and passions of mankind. Stress grows manifold because of wrong attitude and unchecked instinctive and egotist desires. The irony is that one adopts artificial and unmindful means of entertainment to get rid of this stress and in turn, fuels negative effects and vulnerability to suffer more tensions and mental and physical weaknesses. The downward trend of the medieval times is a well-known example to illustrate this fact.

The emperors and generals of the medieval times spent most of their life in battlefields. Their thirst to expand their territories and the fear of enemies' attack from the neighborhood used to keep them excited, tensed and over-burdened most of the time. What could be the worse form of stressful life? They used to feel stimulating entertainment in wine and women without realizing that it was further fueling their passions. When they came out of this intoxicating pleasure, ambitions of grabbing more lands, wealth and

women used to take over. If there was no possibility of conquering more, they attempted quenching their arrogance by hunting and killing innocent animals in the forests. They used to find pleasure in wild display of cruel might.

Another means of royal relaxation they adopted was fishing. This tradition has continued in the later generations of pompous affluents too. Except for the fisherman for whom it is a means of bread & butter, what exactly is the purpose of fishing? In reality, this fashionable hobby of the riches is simply 'killing time in taking lives of tiny creatures'. Entertainment via shooting the flying birds or via horse race, etc also falls in this category of harassing the innocent animals for wild excitement. Horseracing is also a mode of gambling for many. For them gambling and bidding is also a hobby, a source of entertainment, which often turns into addiction and also augments their hidden stresses and animal instincts in several ways.

Why would one need a bandage if there was no wound? Why would one take painkillers and physiotherapeutic massaging if there was no pain in any part of the body? Why would one stain the history of mankind with terror and tyranny if one had no devilish ego or ambitions like that of Aurangzeb, Changez Khan, and the likes? If one were satisfied with modest resources and simple living, one would never have to face the inevitable stresses invited by audacious ambitions and selfish passions to acquire power and snobbish possessions. Then there would be no need of relieving such stresses and no possibility of further fuelling the fire of passions by obnoxious entertainments.

In fact no kind of entertainment would alleviate the stresses generated because of cruel mentality, arrogance and obsessions of the kind cited above unless the root-cause itself is weeded out.

Creative Entertainment & Stress-Relief:

Excursion trips with a purpose of gaining knowledge and practical experience in a chosen field of knowledge is counted among creative entertainments. It is different from roaming around, touring for picnicking, sightseeing and shopping. The latter may provide a temporary diversion and joy but the net gain is nothing. That way one may just stand in a corner and watch the traffic on a busy road or amuse oneself by looking at varieties of people and their activities on a crowded railway platform or bus stand. Visiting grand fun-fares, crowded galas, is also similar. One will spend more money and get more fatigue and risk of infection than gaining real entertainment in such activities.

Trekking in a countryside full of natural beauty and soothing breeze of fresh air on the banks of a river is so different from walking on the busy market streets of mega cities or hogging and shopping in a mall. Both may provide diversions and expose one to new attractions, but the latter only adds more to one's strain and stress than providing any rejuvenation. Having Nature's serene proximity in the farms or gardens, or simply having keen observation of the flora and fauna near the house, watching the activities of animals and birds around provide joyous diversion to the mind and also offer new knowledge. If that is not possible, then re-arranging the house, cleaning and organizing the setup at home or office would also be good options for recreation. Watering the plants, gardening, planting and nurturing trees in the surrounding area, etc are far more satisfying, useful and soothing activities and creative modes of stress alleviation than attending lavish parties or watching some vague movie.

Quest for new information and knowledge is Nature's reward to human mind. That is why reading and discussions also offer creative entertainment. However, the topics taken up in these are again a matter of one's interest. Reading substandard novels or books on

erotic subjects, and discussions or pondering on related topics are contrary to these powerful modes of creative diversion. Gossiping also counters the positive impact, and amounts to sheer wastage of time and energy.

You may read lightly but you should also introspect and analyze whether or not it is adding to your knowledge or useful information, satisfying your quest to know the world better, giving positive and constructive direction to your thoughts, or glazing your intellect. What do you often talk or discuss about, and with whom, also needs to be scrutinized. You need not be an intellectual or learned person. You only need to be aware of the natural quest of the mind and watch your thoughts. Your mind will start enjoying this self-inspection of the flow of thoughts and gradually develop a creative interest in good reading, listening to good lectures/discourses and participating in meaningful discussions.

Sports played as refreshing exercises are wonderful means of enthusing the mind and energizing the body. Not only the games in a playground or tennis and badminton courts, some people also enjoy sitting for hours playing cards, sitting in front of the chess board, and spending whole day watching cricket match. It gives them pleasure mainly because their minds feel no pressure of loosing or winning, of gaining praises or suffering insult, etc.

This indicates that any task that engages the mind in doing some creative work and that is not linked with any profit or loss, or with any kind of success or failure, may also serve as a creative entertainment for relief from stress.

Any task that is carried out with sportive enthusiasm and positive conditioning or engrossment of mind will become an entertainment, no matter how much hard labor it may require. Then

there will no fatigue or stress in doing it irrespective of whether it is a new challenge or a routine job. If the mind is meandering elsewhere or is indifferent or unwilling to do something, then no matter how comfortable or beneficial the job is, it would appear vexing, tiresome and straining.

It is all the shading of mind that makes something boring and stressful or interesting, rejuvenating and fulfilling. We should therefore learn to change our outlook as per the tasks at hand in a given circumstance and cultivate a temperament to regard every work as useful and important. A little training of mind and practice will awaken our up-till-now dormant tendencies of natural entertainment and make life a field of joyful sports.

An Easy Exercise:

Natural smile on one's face is indicative of happy and relaxed state of one's mind. Gloom, fear, despair, arrogance, stress and related negativities cast unpleasant or repulsive shades on the face that cannot be hidden by any amount of make up. An expression of childlike joy and natural calm on the other hand makes even a wrinkled face of an old person glow with charm. Everyone gets attracted towards a happy child and wants to play with him. The cheerful face and natural grin of a child makes him so cute and attractive. You should also attempt to keep smiling.

Practice of making a smiling face renders instant and effective entertainment, as it relaxes the nerves and muscles in the brain and facial region up to neck. Take a deep breath. Now look at your face in a mirror and try to smile in such a way that would look most natural and attractive. This attempt itself will lighten and divert your mood. Sight of your own smiling face in the mirror will induce a spark of cheer in your mind. This simple practice will become a habit

and help you remain ever smiling and calm. The glow of your natural smile would also create soothing ambience for the others around.

If your face is beaming with a sober smile, anyone who looks at it will also get a cheering signal and reciprocate accordingly. Smile is like a mirror through which you may see the pleasure of your face reflected on others. It is like a message in a subtle language that echoes in the surrounding ambience and reflects back to you. It should be an integral part of your face; like the shadow of your body remains with you all the time, your smile should also become a characteristic of your personality.

The joy of plants and trees is expressed in their blossoming flowers and fruits. Spring is referred as the queen of all seasons, as it is the season of rejuvenation of Nature's joy and beauty. It is the season of blooming smile of the flora and fauna all around. Blooming flowers symbolize spontaneous joy and beauty. Cheerful progress is therefore termed as flourishing success. Bouquet of fresh flowers is a medium of exchange of romantic feelings among the lovers, a token of respectful welcome of important guests, a symbol of goodwill among allies. Even the sacraments of worshiping a deity are incomplete without flowers. Flowers are so important because they reflect the smile of Nature.

When one feels upbeat in the moments of success, or on receiving anticipated support and favor, smile occurs without any effort. One does not need any entertainment at these times. More challenging and precious is self-creation of entertainment in the unfavorable circumstances. The art of smiling in all circumstances makes you the winner, the master of entertaining your mind and endows you with the key to peace and happiness. You may begin with a sort of 'forced' training of bringing smile on your face, it may make you feel

artificial in the initial stages, but because of its soothing impact on your body and ambience around, and upon your social interactions, you will not take much time in getting used to it. With some practice, your mind will begin to aspire for it. Smiling face will then become your identity and will also help keeping your mood tuned-up in general.

Your self-training exercise of having permanent natural smile is interlinked and mutually supportive to your positive attitude. It will help keeping your mind light and calm and thus nurture your positive attitude and sporting spirit. The latter will ensure natural generation and sustenance of inner peace and enthusiasm, of which, smile is an automatic and innate offshoot.

Nature has gifted you with the boon of smile, use it and generate the perennial spring of serene joy within.



Affordable Means of Quality-Entertainment

Have you seen God? Jesus Christ was once asked. "Yes", he responded. "Can you show Him to us?"

"Sure, Why Not?" Christ said. People around were amazed. They could not wait any more. "Kindly show Him now itself...!" They voiced eagerly.

Christ looked at a little child in the crowd, took him in his lap and said — "Here is He!" God resides in anyone who is pure hearted, simple and free of all sins and vices.

We all see and meet so many children around us — in our families and neighborhood. Many of us must have lived with our own kids, and played with those of our relatives and friends, etc. Many a times while walking on a road or in a garden, or while traveling, we also talk and play with strangers' children who come near us. All young children are cute and lovable.

Kids are very quick at picking up the words spoken around them and mimicking the expressions they often see. They can feel our feelings towards them. Even a little baby who can't walk or talk has excellent

capability of sensing the feelings and expressions of family members; this is how he learns things from them. This shows that a child has an alert mind with significant grasping and retaining powers.

A child is naturally truthful. He does nothing bad that he would want to or need to hide. He has no greed or craving to possess anything. He eats whatever he can and leaves the rest as it is. He does not think of preserving or stocking it. Though he cannot do any useful work in that tender age, he is by nature very energetic and industrious! Except in sleeping state, a child always remains active. He does not know the purpose or effect of doing what he does but even then he keeps doing something or the other. His enthusiasm to do something drives him all the time and keeps him busy.

The activity of a child is not just a random offshoot of his zest or agility but is in fact, a process of his learning. He tries to learn things in his own ways. He sometimes plays with a toy in a manner we show and train him to do. But often he tries his own tricks. He even breaks the toy. This is because of his natural curiosity to know how the toy 'functions'.

A child's love is unconditional. He does not expect anything in return. He does not discriminate between people in any respect. He does not know the difference of creed, nationality, language, religion, age or gender. Anyone in his company can receive his love, his soft touch and his unalloyed giggle. His company makes us feel so blissful. All our fatigue, our tensions, our negativity is wiped out by his sweet smile. Why can't we also learn from his company the secret of having and generating unconstrained joy? His qualities of learning from everything, finding every condition, every work in hand as joyful, teach us an easy art of living.

Not only of the humans, the babies of animals also are so cute! In all colors, forms and sizes they are beautiful. Their jumping, running around, fighting with each other, everything is so engrossing.

We bring toys and games for children to entertain them. God has gifted us with living toys all around in the form of children. Their company is such a wonderful mode of calming and rejuvenating the mind. It also offers new light if we keep our learning eyes open. If we have not hardened our heart, narrowed or shielded it with false-pride, the company of a child will have soothing and inspiring sublime effects on our emotions.

Boons of Friendship:

It is said that having good friends is the greatest of fortunes on this earth. Indeed, the thought of meeting a close friend is itself so cheering! The attraction and impact of friendship is very intense. We may not name it so, but it is the warmth of friendship that nurtures the bonds in family relationships too. Even married life is the most successful when husband and wife regard each other as friends. It is the welding power of friendship that makes the concept of "two bodies one mind" possible.

Friendship with wrong persons is harmful in all respects. The influence of bad company drags one to the slippery path of decline. But the point being made in the present context is that the feeling of amity has a great charm. The joy of meeting a close friend — having whatever his qualities — is so enchanting! So charming! Nothing can match it. "Talking to a friend" is a time-tested and instant mode of lightening the mood, and relaxing and cheering the mind. It is thus a universal kind of entertainment. Prudent selection of friends can make friendship a means to properly uplifting oneself too.

Music – A Universal Entertainment:

Music is a powerful means of entertainment that vibrates the emotional chords. But, like in the choice of friends, one should be

cautious to avoid the kind of music that stimulates obscene, erotic or violent feelings. Be that instrumental or vocal music, if the melody or lyrics inspires goodwill, harmony and peace, one will feel serene delight and calmness while listening, playing or singing it. One does not have to be an expert musician, nor does one have to learn music to experience this joy. At times people begin to dance in the engrossment of delightful music or devotional songs.

In the remote or underdeveloped areas where no sophisticated mode of entertainment has reached or people can't afford the expenses of having any, folk music and folk dancing remain predominant modes of entertainment. Every country, every region has its own range of folk music and dances. These are integral parts of their respective cultures and have the potential to offer ever-fresh amusement to people from any part of the world. Across the globe several cultural organizations are also experimenting on newer ways and forms of presenting folk music and dance.

Nature's Arrangement:

Just as any tragedy, severe loss, or worry becomes a cause of despair and depression, happiness on the other hand induces new zeal, new hope in one's life. The receding of water levels seen at the time of low tides is compensated by the high tides. In the same way, dullness and tensions of disorderly and stressful life-style are alleviated or removed by entertainment.

The difficulties faced due to darkness in the night are eliminated by dawn of sunlight in the day. The growing darkness of first half of lunar month is countered by the expanding moonlight in the bright half. Nature has arranged for such options and provisions to maintain balance in all circumstances of life. Entertainment is one of them. It is certainly the best way to counter the sorrows, tensions and anguishes.

It is perfectly fine to entertain the mind to free it of unavoidable pressures and stresses. The difficulties we face or mistakes we make in identifying the best modes of entertainment occur because we often remain ignorant or do not take interest in adopting simple ways of living a natural, happy life. We also tend to neglect the easy means of classic entertainment readily available around us.

Of the diverse names given to God, the most complete one that is referred in the Upanishads is — *sacchidānanda* (a liaison of "sat", "chit" and "ānanda"). "Sat" implies eternal existence and absolute reality. "Chit" implies consciousness and infinite power of cognition and knowledge acquisition. "Ānand" here refers to unlimited, beatifying bliss. The real self, the soul of every being also has these characteristics. Thus nobody should lack any power, knowledge or joy. But, what we find in this world is just the contrary! Why is this so?

We do not realize and benefit from our immense potentials, as we identify ourselves only with the physical body. In spite of being bound inside the periphery of the physical body, we can, by fully using our consciousness power, acquire enormous amount of vital spiritual energy, knowledge and joy from anywhere in the universe. We are deprived of all this because of our ignorance and wrong approach to life.

Most of our consciousness power is under-utilized or gets evaporated due to mental agility, ego and numerous worldly aspirations and passions. All the problems and complexities we face or experience in this world, are because of wrong training and misuse of our mind and its intellectual and emotional faculties. But the solutions to all these also lie in our mind only.

Awakening of Consciousness Force in the mind and focusing it on sagacious thoughts would gradually empower us with tremendous

strength and enlightenment. The immediate benefit is that our minds would become vigilant to avoid all mistakes and illusions and thus uproot the very cause of all worries and tensions. Nothing will then hinder the spring of joy emanated from within. [The real intent behind Yoga disciplines and spiritual practices (*sādhana*) is to help us achieve this state of absolute happiness].

Entertainment and the consequent joy obtained with the help of artificial means is like heavy showers or spark of lightening with thunderbolt which disappears in a short time. We can't hope for anything better from them. The bliss of natural gifts within and around us not only offers sustained happiness but also helps create positive and pleasant ambience for others too.

On worldly fronts, there is no end to scarcities unless one adopts a thoughtful approach to life. Even the entire gamut of resources of the earth and wealth of the whole world would be insufficient to quench the thirst of cravings and egotist ambitions. The cynical attitude of seeing scarcities and adversities around will also keep us deprived of benefiting from even what we have. Nature has stored the nectar of saffron in the navel of "Kasturi" deer. Its heaven fragrance spreads from this very center in the body of the deer. But ironically, the deer keeps running and searching for it outside. We, the extroverts and the ignorant, are also like that. Natural source of unlimited bliss is hidden within us, but day and night we keep thriving to buy it using money, through the hoards of possessions and other worldly means.

If we pay a little attention and ponder over our real self, change our attitude from negative to positive, and set our conduct and goals right to make best use of what is already with us, then everything around will appear pleasant. Every circumstance would then bring a fresh breeze of hope and joy for us....

Struggle is an Elite Amusement!

As we all know, stagnation and lethargy lead to degeneration and degradation. This is true of every system, every component of Nature. If there is degeneration or degradation, there is no life. And if there is no life, there is no joy.

Life, by its very definition is evolving every moment. Progress, activity, creativity, etc are natural signs of life. But none of these is possible without struggle. Be that the struggle for 'survival of the fittest', struggle for existence against odds, or struggle for ascent, it is inevitable in life. Human life, being most evolved of the life-forms on the earth is full of struggles of diverse forms and intensities.

In our day-to-day life itself we keep struggling in one way, or the other. For example, there is always a possibility of attacks of viruses, bacteria, mosquitoes, bedbugs, cockroaches, lizards, snakes, scorpions, or any other kind of microbes, insects, etc. Soil, water and air around us, the vegetable and fruits we eat, also carry many harmful parasites, microorganisms and pathogens. Now-a-days

these are even found to contain toxins due to pollution and excessive use of pesticides etc. We can't afford to be careless.

Violent animals like lions and leopards attack and eat other animals without any fault of the latter. Howsoever heinous and unethical they may be, but cruelty, tyranny, oppression and other kinds of devilish tendencies and vices and unfair practices do exist in this world in one form or the other. Nonviolence, sympathy, mercy, generosity are precious virtues. But if under the magnanimity of these virtues one continues to ignore or pardon the evils and attackers, the latter will grow stronger and spread their hazardous wings further and further....

Struggle is Nature's Requirement:

The struggle of a being begins right from the embryonic stage. For example, in mother's womb it struggles to survive on whatever is naturally fed through the umbilical cord. For taking birth it has to fight hard to break the cord and come out of the closet of the womb. In no time it has to learn and make an effort to suck mother's milk; it also has to struggle to get acclimatized in the new environment and so on. Vital activities like respiration, pulsation of heart, blood-circulation, and brain functions have to continue every moment of life. The moment these pause, the life ends.

The system of Nature is such that no efforts are required for acquiring dirt and earning degradation. But, for hygiene and health one has to clean the body and the surroundings and exert substantially to eat well and digest. Body and mind both are to be strictly disciplined like training of the wild animals. If these are not triggered to work, in no time the lethargic body will fall sick and the capabilities of mind will be rusted by ignorance, dullness and whims. Nature has designed its system so that nothing can escape struggle.

There are some places (e.g. outer wall of huge building) that cannot be cleaned by people in general. Stormy breeze and rains clean every such thing too. Because, Nature does not tolerate dirt and stillness for too long. In fact the maintenance of the cycle of Nature and existence of life here is itself a grand struggle.

Struggle for Survival and Ascent:

Not only the endeavors of fighting and uprooting something evil and wrong, but also the efforts of protection and defense against these are a part of the inevitable struggle for survival and growth and for maintaining one's value-system and self-respect.

Negativity pervaded in the ambience around and downwardly trends of the society are often so pulling that if one were not struggling to move ahead against such prevalent trends, one would be caught in their whirlpool. Then there will be no hopes of real progress, satisfaction, peace and joy in life. Being vigilant, alert and bold to face and conquer the resistance, attraction and pressures of prevailing social trends and attacks of harsh circumstances is inevitable for evolution. If struggling was always dangerous or risky, only mighty tyrants or adventurous intrepid would have been seen ruling the entire world and there would have been near total absence of ordinary good people. But we all know that it is not true.

Virtues and evils, auspiciousness and adversity both exist in this world. This grand garden has flowers as well as thorns. The day is illumined by sunlight but darkness of night is also there. Along with sweet, sour and salty tastes, some bitter and spicy tastes are also necessary for varieties and balance in diet. There are ethics, social norms and civic codes of conduct to inspire and expand benevolence, moral values and mutual respect and harmony. But, there also are police, warfare and armed forces to check the wrongs and prevent the invaders.

A farmer has to clear the shrubs and plough the land, plant the seeds, irrigate the fields and keenly guard the saplings. It is only after this day-and-night toil that he can harvest the crop. Long years of diligent study bring the fruits of education and success. Every profession, every business demands unflinching industrious endeavors for noticeable achievements and rewarding gains. Making and managing home is no less challenging; it does not even allow a holiday break. Every front of life has its own demands and difficulties. It is the persistent and zealous struggle of numerous generations of humans that has carried it from the Stone Age to the modern civilization with its ultra advanced technological developments.

Different Standards of Mind, Struggle & Entertainment:

The sphere of amusement of small (less evolved) minds revolves around pleasures of the sense organs. Average level minds usually find entertainment in cinema, plays, music, sports, comics, or fictions and roving around or picnicking out with friends, shopping, etc. Such people remain deprived of the distinct delight of struggle.

More evolved minds find immense joy in striving hard to do something worth, in implementing new ideas for far-reaching improvements, in treading the path towards higher goals, etc. Their struggle for higher aims is indeed a superior kind of entertainment that keeps their energy and morale boosted-up and sparks ever-new cheerfulness in their minds.

Good students wanting to achieve brilliant success and superior careers enjoy their studies and burn midnight oil to improve their knowledge and skills. Dedicated teachers find enlightening joy in their consistent struggle against ignorance; this is why they can so beautifully carve crude minds into fine talents. Struggle to eradicate

the disease and make their patients healthy is the prime goal of noble doctors.

Intrepid patriots volunteer to join defense services and enjoy with pride their strictly disciplined, tough and strenuous routine full of risks and hard tests. Fighting with mighty opponents is an amusing activity for courageous wrestlers. Traversing stormy waves of the seas, diving deep in the oceans against all odds, unfolding the mysteries of Nature concealed in the dreaded darkness of dense wilds, offer thrilling joy to the adventurous explorers. Precious discoveries and inventions would not have been possible had the great scientists not enjoyed the struggle of enduring research.

Struggle to protect and spread goodness is like worship for the great social reformers, saints and altruistic leaders. Their elevated spirits spread serene bliss in the ambience. What other amusement would they need? Their hearts pulsate with distinct joy of spirituality. Their wisdom defines ideal entertainment. Their attitude and works define and illustrate the most evolved and elite form of entertainment – struggle for illumined aims.

Tips for Commoners:

Most of us, the ordinary mortal beings, cannot jump over to such high goals. We cannot imagine ourselves enjoying struggle as elite entertainment. This is because we don't have the right kind of mindset.

Crucifixion was like a humor for Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot even think of how He in human form could bear such pains. True, we cannot be the historic personalities like noble philosopher Socrates who cheerfully drank a cup of poison for his ideals; or like revered Bhishma Pitamaha who in spite of being severely injured in the

Mahabharat war, chose to lie on the bed of sharp arrows piercing his body and could postpone his death at will. Neither can we be like the great king Rana Sanga, who continued fighting in the battlefield despite having eighty deep wounds on his body and conquered over the enemies of Mevar (Rajasthan). But, don't we know that thousands of ordinary beings like us had bravely given their lives in the freedom movement of India. We may attribute it to the trends of those times and presence of angelic leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. Whatever we may argue, we certainly should not let ourselves become so weak or coward who would escape from our duties, or cry over and look for others' help in every moment of difficulty or hardship.

As pointed out earlier, the courage and potential to triumph over all agonies and challenges emerges from our own mind. We only need to adopt the righteous attitude. We can recall the examples of great men and women to inspire our mind in a positive direction. Many a times remembering the experiences of acquaintances in similar circumstances also help calming anxiety, fear, perplexity, aggression or depression in testing moments.

Adverse circumstances should be viewed as higher-level examination, passing which will transmute our qualities, sharpen our talents and exalt our potentials further. We have to put in best of our efforts, then, even failure will add to beneficial experience for future and also chisel our personality.

Emotional balance is essential to enjoy any amusement. This should be our prime focus. One who has learnt this art, he alone can avail lasting happiness.

Life is full of challenges. Circumstances of life keep changing — neither the favorable nor the harsh ones are here to stay long. Neither

the internal nor the outer world is void of adversities. No one is here who does not have to face unfavorable times. Then why panic? Those longing to grab and preserve cozy life and happiness, or hunting for peace should be told that real calmness and joy is that which is attained after bravely traversing the phase of struggle and hardship.

Have faith that you are born to be happy. Nothing except your own attitude can bestow happiness upon you. Teach yourself that Nature poses struggles before you as opportunities to experience refined joy, to augment your courage, patience and wisdom and to see brighter horizons of life. Struggle is therefore an elite entertainment. Welcome it!



Curiosity & Novelty Within

Those who are used to a simple and straightforward lifestyle full of light and sensible humor, and who also know the art of cooperating and sharing with fellow beings, live a naturally delightful and progressive life. Look at the blossoming flowers in a garden and the dancing waves in a sea! They are full of bliss and also distribute the same unconditionally to anyone who sees them. Fresh breeze enjoys playing with the trees and mountains and extends its message of being naturally happy to all. Congregations of stars unfurl their illumined glee all over the night and demonstrate that the light of cheerful unity can conquer all horizons of darkness.

Butterflies flutter happily with the multicolored paintings on their tiny wings. Cuckoo's bliss is expressed in its melodious warbling. Joyous dance of the peacocks with their artistic wings spread all around adds to the beauty of Nature. Humming bees are never tired of their cheerful buzzing. Hoards of lovely calves of deers jumping in the green yards can fill anybody's mind with bubbling enthusiasm. Similarly other birds and animals are all so happy with whatever

Nature has gifted them! They also continue expanding this joy all around throughout their lives.

You might have seen ants carrying their eggs before the monsoons. Their queuing discipline is in no way less than the trained march-past of any army. Do you know about the perfection of design of the 'termite - townships' in the mud-tunnels? Indeed their talents demonstrate advanced mastery of professional architects. The honeybees compete with the best chemical engineers in their optimal designing of the honey-web and processing of honey in it. Wherever you see, Nature has displayed enormous expertise of the so-called lower organisms that challenge the creative talents and skills of humans. Almighty has endowed everyone with plentiful for self-reliant and happy sustenance of natural life. Not only that, Nature also exhibits this gamut free of cost for the delight of all those who care to see these resources in its magnificent panorama.

Precious Human Body:

Human species has been bestowed with what is worth its haute stature in the animal kingdom. Look at the mirror and focus your sight on your face. Compare its appearance with that of some animal. Does any animal have such a measured proportion of size of so many features, so fabulously designed on the face? In normal case, every component of the face is so lively, delicate and nicely fixed at its position. It is difficult to find a parallel to the variety and sophistication of Nature's art reflected in any component of human body. Children, youths, old, white, black, men, women, pretty or ordinary looking, everybody has his/her distinct features and expressions. Look at it through the eyesight of a true artist, you will find every kind of physique and every combination of skin complexion and facial features so beautiful.

The human body is itself a masterpiece of splendid potentials. Even the tiniest unit of a cell is so perfectly organized in it. The super computing network of neurons, the interconnectivity of the nerves and veins, the mobility and flexibility of the limbs, the sense organs with marvellous faculties of perception and movement, etc, all exhibit majestic creations of some super advanced technology. Apart from their anatomical, physiological and/or biological importance, the different organs also are crucial for numerous actions.

Hands: The movements of hands and fingers, their efficient grip and flexibility, are simply amazing. These can be used in holding things and shifting them from one place to other. Using the hands one can write monuments of literature, scientific research volumes, draw paintings, play musical instruments, create sculptures, and what not. One who has such multipurpose tools readily available all the time is so lucky!

If you pay attention, you will find ever-new ability in your hands. Have you noticed how the *mudrās* (postures) of hands compliment the verbal communications? They make communication by sign-language possible; many a times their use helps explanation of a point more clearly and effectively than written or spoken words. The impact an orator or an actor makes would not be possible without the impressive gestures of his/her hands. *Mudrās* and synchronized motion of hands are essential in every form of dance.

The *mudrā* of "*Namaskāra*" is used in Indian Culture to greet someone with respect, in European culture right hand is waved in a specific gesture at the time of seeing someone off, it is also a common fashion across the world to respond to the applaud of congregations of audiences or viewers by waving of hands. Amicable shaking of

hands by two persons indicates as though their personalities are uniting too. Little movements or 'dance' of hands alone are sufficient to divert the mind when needed. Many counselors advise their clients to try this trick to alleviate their stress or depression. *Mudrās* of hands are given specific importance in the science of yoga; practice of specific *mudrās* of hands^[2-3] are recommended to balance the five basic elements, or as healing remedies.

Other Organs: Eyes are among the liveliest organs of the body — they speak in their own language. Eyes are said to be the peephole to one's mind. Indeed, the expressions of mind are instantaneously reflected in the eyes. Real meaning of what one speaks cannot be grasped fully without simultaneous reading of his eyes. If one sits in front of a mirror and looks into his own eyes, he would feel as though a miniature of his personality is sketched there.

As such, the nose is only a long muscle. But its size and shape play a decisive role in beauty of the face. Layers of expressions and impressions fold or unfold with the up and down movements of the nose and its wrinkles. Similar is true of the lips and teeth; they are prominent features of beauty. Their opening or closing, stretching or relaxing, hold the key to real expression of one's personality. Other organs also play their crucial roles. They constitute and control overall impressions of one's personality and behavioral impact.

Body-language is a crucial aspect of performing art; theater, cinema and television programs are well known examples of its power. The way modern art and cinema has exploited it is a disrespect and degradation of the invaluable rewards of Nature gifted to the human body. Noticing that a mere look at the genitals of an adult body excites and attracts most viewers, the so-called sexy look has become

a top criterion of beauty and market-value of those in show-business of acting, modeling or fashion designing. The modern culture of commercialization and consumerism is thriving on advertisements deploying physical appearance and crafted movements and expressions of the human body.

Brain – The Crown Organ: As we all know, a human being is the crown prince of the entire animal kingdom because of his evolved brain. Brain is the functional unit of mental and intellectual activities. So vast and diverse is the domain of these activities that recording and depiction of these activities for few seconds would itself be enormous like a glimpse of the universe!

Boundless flow of good or bad instincts, emotions, and thoughts keep erupting here every moment. Brain takes decisions in fractions of a second to respond to the physical perceptions of the sense organs and to control so many complicated activities driven by it. The convolution of the problems resolved by the brain in a few moments is so vast that even the fastest court or judiciary of the world, with its elaborate infrastructure and huge team of efficient supporting staff, would take at least few decades to pass a judgment on any case of such complexity.

Majestic Power of The Mind:

It is through the power of *chetanā* (consciousness force) that the brain regulates all body functions. It is through its invisible functional entity – the mind – that we experience our existence and the existence of the world around. There are two principal streams of expression of the power of mind — intellect and emotions.

Intellect: It is the creative power and incisive talent of human intellect that has generated languages for expression of thoughts, which has helped us accrue the vast treasure of philosophical, scientific, linguistic and literary knowledge. Its generative power and brilliance augments further with its use. It looks like its contribution would continue Age after Age in this world and even in the new world that might manifest some time. It is only the chiseled acumen of human mind that can conceptualize and attempt to realize the existence of God.

Not only the scientific inventions and developments, but also the social systems, ethics, laws, administration, and the whole lot of related developments are offshoots of human intellect. It is this faculty of mind that has gifted us marvelously on multiple fronts of life. Although, misuse of this faculty has divided the human society and the world in boundaries of religions, cults, nations and communities, but even that demonstrates the enormous power of this very faculty. Biologically, similar to other species, all samples of the human species should also have had similar nature, activities and living. But on the contrary, no two humans are found to be the same, because, it's a species with ever-evolving mind.

Every one in the world has his own ego, nature, thoughts, convictions, predilections and prejudices. The division, the differences, the rivalry, the fanaticism is sometimes so sharp that people confront and even kill each other, communities are ready to ruin themselves in the insane attempts of destroying the rivals, nations fight with each other, there have even been world wars. But all this is due to astray and arrogant intellect. The day it sees the light of righteousness and supreme interest, in no time it will gulp its own web of separatism, wane the boundaries of false pride, selfishness and biases, and find solutions and practical ways to unite. Then, the

entire human society will live like a large global family for collective welfare, and experience unalloyed joy.

Emotions: The natural level and power of emotions are higher than that of intellect. Emotions are more evolved and intense faculty of the mind. Sublime faith in the purity, divine virtues and light of the soul resides deep in the emotional core. Self-restrain, tolerance, benevolence, compassion, sacrifices for noble aims, etc are hidden in this field of *chetanā*. Spirituality pertains to this aspect of human consciousness. Refinement and awakening of this deeper domain by spiritual endeavors makes possible enlightenment of other faculties of mind including intellect, and endows one with unalloyed bliss. The seed of supernatural talents and powers (*riddhi -siddhi*) referred in the scriptures also lies in the depths of emotions. Spiritual transmutation of this emotional core of mind initiates the evolution of human being into a divine being.

Just a thought of all this is so elevating! This human body made up of blood, flesh and bones contains in itself an incredible universe. Even the (bio)molecular world within its tiny cells is so wonderful! Nuclei of supramental faculties and elixir of divine consciousness force are hidden in the human mind. All this is so astonishing! So thrilling! Pondering over it would engross and enthuse our minds for a long while with inexplicable joy. Endeavors of thoughtful use of this precious life and its spiritual evolution would then beatify us with unique delight of supreme entertainment.



Additional Reading:

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- [3] Dr. Pandya Pranav (Ch. Ed.) (Chief Editor): Effects of Yoga-Postures of Hand (*Hasta Mudrās*). *Akhand Jyoti – The Light Divine*. Volume 5, Issues: May-June pp. 29-32, July-Aug. pp. 29-32, 2007
- [4] Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya: *Chamatkarī Viśeṣṭāon Se Bharā Mānaviya Mastiṣka*. Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya Samagra Vangmaya Vol. 18 Akhand Jyoti Sansthan, Mathura; UP, India. 1995.
- [5] Human Brain – Apparent Boon of the Omnipotent. (Book compiled from translation of some sections of [4] above). Publ. Shri Wedmata Gayatri Trust, Shantikunj, Hardwar 2000. (3rd Print, 2007)

